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APPEARANCES:

John J. Pringle, Jr., Esquire
Adams and Reese, LLP
1501 Main Street, Fifth Floor
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
Attorney for the Applicant

Carolyn Lessie Hammonds, Esquire (VIA TELEPHONE)
South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff
1401 Main Street, Suite 900
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

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EXHIBITS

(There were no exhibits marked during the deposition.)

STIPULATIONS

It is stipulated and agreed that this
deposition is being taken pursuant to the
South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.

It is stipulated by and between counsel
and the witness that the reading and signing
of the following deposition be, and the same
are, hereby waived.

1 MR. PRINGLE: All right. My name is
2 Jack Pringle. I'm counsel for Moving
3 Professionals, LLC, d/b/a Moving Pros.
4 We're having a Shipper Witness deposition of
5 Ms. Erin Wicker pursuant to Order
6 No. 2016-46-H issued in Docket
7 No. 2016-118-T on May the 5th, 2006.

8 Lessie, you want to introduce yourself
9 real quick?

10 MS. HAMMONDS: Yes. This is Lessie
11 Hammonds -- and I've already spelled that
12 for the court reporter -- at the South
13 Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff. And I
14 am counsel for ORS on this case. Our
15 address is 1401 Main Street, Suite 900,
16 Columbia 29201.

17 MR. PRINGLE: Excellent. Thank you,
18 Lessie.

19 MS. HAMMONDS: You're welcome.

20 MR. PRINGLE: And now if we could go
21 ahead and swear the witness in.

22 ERIN WICKER, having been duly sworn, deposes and
23 testifies as follows:

24 DIRECT EXAMINATION

25 BY MR. PRINGLE:

1 Q. Okay. Ms. Wicker, I appreciate you taking
2 the time to give a deposition today in this case.
3 Let me establish a couple of sort of ground rules
4 that will make it easier to get this done.

5 One of the things that happens
6 conversationally but can be difficult for the
7 court reporter is if we talk over one another.
8 So if you can allow Lessie and me to finish our
9 questions before you answer them, that would be
10 great. Will that work?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And along -- and I think you've
13 already picked up on this -- it's important for
14 the court reporter that you give her verbal
15 replies rather than nods or shaking of the head
16 or -- because that won't show up in the
17 transcript. That work?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. Excellent. Well, let's go ahead and
20 get started. This is, as I discussed a little
21 bit, a deposition in a case where Moving
22 Professionals, LLC, is seeking a statewide
23 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity
24 to provide household goods moving services.

25 What that means is, they want authority from

1 the Commission to provide moving services, to
2 move household goods moves across the State of
3 South Carolina.

4 So when I'm talking about the kind of
5 authority that they are seeking, I'm talking
6 about moves that only take place within the State
7 of South Carolina. Does that make sense?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. If you would, state your sort of full
10 name and what you do for a living.

11 A. My name Erin Wicker and I currently work for
12 a residential property management company. I
13 handle all of the leasing and marketing and
14 pretty much management of currently 204
15 apartments.

16 Q. Okay. And what's the name of that company?

17 A. It's called Estates Incorporated.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MS. HAMMONDS: I'm sorry, I couldn't
20 get that, Jack. What was the name again?

21 THE WITNESS: Estates Incorporated.

22 MS. HAMMONDS: Estates Incorporated.

23 Thank you.

24 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

25 BY MR. PRINGLE:

1 **Q. Is that a -- is that a Columbia-based**
2 **organization or is it located elsewhere, too?**

3 A. Our -- our -- our headquarters, I believe
4 would be the good word, is at 1401 Main Street.

5 **Q. Okay.**

6 A. So probably the same building she's in, I
7 think.

8 MS. HAMMONDS: Yes.

9 **Q. All right. And you mentioned that Estates**
10 **Inc. manages somewhere in the neighborhood of 200**
11 **apartments?**

12 A. My specific community manages 204. There
13 are three other properties that are also just in
14 Columbia. They're building a fifth. They own
15 one in Charlotte, North Carolina, as well.

16 **Q. Okay. And are most of these apartment**
17 **complexes or does it also involve just other**
18 **houses and structures that may be used as rental**
19 **properties?**

20 A. These are specifically apartment
21 communities.

22 **Q. Okay. And what are some of the apartment**
23 **communities in the Columbia area that ...**

24 A. I am currently at Arcadia's Edge. I have
25 worked at 5000 Forest, 42 Magnolia, 700 Woodrow.

1 Q. Okay. And 700 Woodrow, is that where The
2 Whitney used to be?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Okay. All right. And how long have you
5 been working with Estates Inc.?

6 A. I am starting my sixth month.

7 Q. Sixth month, okay. And tell me a little bit
8 about your -- any previous experience you may
9 have in this general area, whether it's apartment
10 leasing or in other areas.

11 A. I spent seven years working for the Better
12 Business Bureau that was in charge of handling
13 any -- all the inquiries, complaints, and, you
14 know, membership for, again, seven years.

15 Q. Was that in Columbia?

16 A. That is in Columbia.

17 Q. Okay. And what kinds of things -- you
18 mentioned this a little bit. What kinds of
19 things were you doing day to day at the Better
20 Business Bureau?

21 A. I was in charge of investigations for the
22 Better Business Bureau. It was probably the most
23 relevant experience to giving, I guess, a
24 deposition for this nature.

25 Q. Sure, sure. Well, what kinds of things did

1 you have an opportunity while working for the
2 Better Business Bureau in Columbia to learn
3 anything about the business or economic
4 environment in Columbia?

5 A. Yeah. Yes. Just the -- I guess the best
6 part about Columbia, I would think, in what I've
7 learned from the Better Business Bureau is, we're
8 not necessarily recession proof, but while other
9 Better Business Bureaus nationwide were losing
10 membership or dropping in relevance, Columbia
11 somehow always manages to stay pretty relevant
12 and consistent throughout.

13 Q. Uh-huh (affirmatively responds). Do you
14 know how many -- or do you have any ballpark
15 estimates of how -- well, let me back up and say,
16 is the Better Business Bureau a membership
17 organization in terms of the company -- or can
18 companies join the Better Business Bureau?

19 A. Companies can join the Better Business
20 Bureau as long as they meet a specific criteria.
21 They have to have answered all of their
22 complaints, signed something saying if they ever
23 did get a complaint that they would do their best
24 to resolve it.

25 It's voluntarily done by the business. A

1 business doesn't have to answer a complaint if
2 they get one or not, but we -- we record and
3 report any of the complaints that we get into our
4 office.

5 **Q. Okay. And what do you know, if anything,**
6 **about -- you mentioned that Columbia -- from your**
7 **experience, Columbia was somewhat recession**
8 **proof. Do you have any knowledge about how the**
9 **Better Business Bureau and its membership grew**
10 **or -- during the time you were there?**

11 A. The time that I was there? I don't -- I
12 don't say that I can give you like specific
13 numbers.

14 **Q. Uh-huh (affirmatively responds).**

15 A. I know that our President and CEO, Jim Camp,
16 would go every year to kind of a national
17 convention for it and we would definitely get
18 recognized in our region for being able to --
19 like for retention purposes, keeping businesses,
20 members, and still growing, as well.

21 **Q. Okay. Okay. Well, in your -- well, I'll**
22 **just go ahead and ask this. In your experience**
23 **with the Better Business Bureau, did you ever**
24 **come across household goods moving companies that**
25 **you recall?**

1 A. Many.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Were some -- did some of those -- some of
5 those businesses have complaints that needed to
6 be answered and handled?

7 A. I always found that the moving industry
8 was -- it didn't necessarily have the best
9 reputation.

10 There were a lot of complaints about, you
11 know, being quoted one price, getting all of
12 their goods on the truck, the goods being moved
13 and then told, "Well, actually it's going to be
14 another price," and the consumer not really
15 having a way to get their goods back without
16 paying extra money. Definitely seemed a little
17 bait and switch.

18 I probably, you know, my last year there
19 spent solely on investigating and I can probably
20 think of four or five cases just like that and I
21 haven't worked there in like two years.

22 Q. Uh-huh (affirmatively responds). Well, did
23 you know at that time that you could have gotten
24 all those complaints directly off your desk and
25 handed to Ms. Hammonds at the ORS and she

1 **would've taken care of all of those things for**
2 **you?**

3 A. That would've been really great to know and
4 you should definitely reach out over there.

5 MS. HAMMONDS: Ms. Wicker --

6 THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.

7 MS. HAMMONDS: -- I greatly appreciate
8 every effort made by the Better Business
9 Bureau.

10 MR. PRINGLE: Good.

11 BY MR. PRINGLE:

12 **Q. Well, moving a little bit to, you know, what**
13 **you're doing currently, as in the -- sort of the**
14 **leasing business, do you ever have opportunity to**
15 **come across moving companies in what you're doing**
16 **now?**

17 A. We do. They come into the office. You
18 know, "Where should we park? Where is this home
19 located? How can we get there?"

20 So I, again, in my six months have probably
21 interacted with -- it's kind of repeat customers
22 for the most part right now, but I've probably
23 met at least four or five different companies
24 just in the last few months.

25 **Q. Have you ever had occasion to -- I mean, any**

1 of the tenants in your -- in those apartments
2 call on you to ask you to help them set up moves?

3 A. Absolutely.

4 Q. Uh-huh (affirmatively responds).

5 A. A lot of people are -- they'll come in kind
6 of new to Columbia. They're looking to build a
7 home or find where -- where in Columbia is the
8 best fit for them. And so they'll stay in an
9 apartment until they know where it is
10 specifically they want to go.

11 Do I want to buy a home? Do I want
12 something else? When they figure it out, you
13 know, because they're still relatively new, it's
14 almost -- my front desk feels like a concierge
15 service. It's, you know, movers; where should I
16 go to dinner; you know, where should I get my
17 haircut.

18 So it's a wide range of information if feel
19 like I'm giving, but I've definitely had the
20 opportunity to recommend at least to ten people a
21 moving company.

22 Q. Okay. And based upon your knowledge, where
23 are -- if at all, are people moving to Columbia
24 from when they come to lease in the various
25 properties that you've mentioned?

1 A. We have a very eclectic range. Columbia,
2 you know, is military. It's a military town. So
3 we do get, you know, an influx of people moving
4 from out of state to instate.

5 But I would say the next thing that is
6 pretty big in our properties is -- you know,
7 30 percent of it is out of state. I'm going to
8 have another 30 percent who are going to be
9 students in -- in the medical or lawyer or some
10 sort of really professional Master's program
11 moving from their college instate to Columbia to
12 finish their degree.

13 And the other 30 percent, I'm comfortable
14 saying is going to be retirees. So someone from
15 Gregg Park who wants to downsize their, you know,
16 11,000-square-foot home to -- before they would
17 want to go to an assisted living or anything like
18 that, they will come, and we have quite a -- I
19 mean, easily 30 percent of our residents are
20 going to fall into that category.

21 **Q. Okay. You just looked at me when you said**
22 **assisted living. You're not suggesting that I'm**
23 **close to that point, are you, just because I have**
24 **gray hair?**

25 A. I'm saying I might know a moving company

1 that could help you move into your assisted
2 living community.

3 **Q. Fantastic. Well, you did mention that --**
4 **that was 30/30/30.**

5 A. Right.

6 **Q. What about the other ten percent?**

7 A. The last ten is probably just going to be,
8 you know, your young professionals. It could
9 even be more than that, honestly. I didn't major
10 in math, so I apologize.

11 But I think our next little category of
12 people that we have there are going to be young
13 professionals who are out of college. They're in
14 town. They aren't ready to buy a home yet
15 because, again, they're still trying to kind of
16 figure out where they want to go career wise.
17 And then they stay with us until they're ready to
18 buy a home.

19 And I'd say whatever -- you know, half of
20 those people are going to stay instate; half of
21 them might be transferred somewhere with their
22 career.

23 **Q. Okay. You mentioned some of the, you know,**
24 **students that were, you know, seeking some**
25 **advanced degrees and some others. Are you aware**

1 of people recently that have moved from
2 Greenville to Columbia for those kinds of
3 purposes that you mentioned?

4 A. I spoke to a girl on the phone this morning.
5 She is -- just got done with her Master's up in
6 the Greenville area and has a job as a school
7 psychiatrist in Richland District Number 1.
8 She's moving in on July 16th.

9 Q. Excellent. And then what about anyone from
10 the Charleston area?

11 A. Charleston area? Let me think.

12 Q. Well, you could just mention if you wanted
13 to just, you know, off the top of your head folks
14 that -- you know, where you remember places in
15 South Carolina that folks might be moving here
16 from.

17 A. I had a family yesterday who could
18 potentially be moving from Pawleys Island.

19 Q. Uh-huh (affirmatively responds).

20 A. They want to be closer to family. I had a
21 lady down -- Hilton Head. They wanted to get
22 closer to their grandchildren. North Augusta,
23 they get transferred over job, job wise.

24 Q. Uh-huh (affirmatively responds).

25 A. I'm trying to think. I've had a couple

1 College of Charleston graduates who are coming
2 again to do some sort of Master program here. I
3 want to say I've had at least two or three of
4 those off the top of my head.

5 Q. Okay. All right. Based upon what you know
6 from your experience as working with Estates
7 Inc., as well as your previous experience for the
8 Better Business Bureau, do you believe that
9 there's a -- there's a current demand for instate
10 moving services in South Carolina?

11 A. I do think there is a demand and I think
12 there's a demand for people who are willing to go
13 through and jump through all the hoops to get it
14 done.

15 Q. Okay. Do you have any -- do you have
16 any -- well, if Moving Professionals/Moving Pros
17 is certified, would you consider recommending
18 them or him for moves?

19 A. Absolutely.

20 Q. Okay. All right. And just to put it
21 another way, do you think based upon what you
22 know about this market, do you believe that the
23 market can handle another mover with statewide
24 authority?

25 A. If you want facts, I know that we had 111

1 move-ins in the last year, and that's just
2 move-ins, and 112 move-outs in the last year and
3 that's at one property with 204 homes inside of
4 it. So I definitely think that there is always
5 going to be a demand for it.

6 **Q. And did you mention, is your company -- and**
7 **this may -- you may or may not have said this --**
8 **building any other properties in South Carolina**
9 **in the Columbia area?**

10 A. They are. They are building the new -- I
11 forget what they're calling it, but it's right
12 across the bridge in the Columbia/Cayce side of
13 town. It's going to have residential -- close to
14 200 more homes and also commercial properties in
15 them, as well.

16 **Q. Uh-huh (affirmatively responds). And then**
17 **from where we're sitting, you can actually see**
18 **The Hub over there and its big screen TV. You**
19 **don't have any specific knowledge about the**
20 **number of people that move in and out of there,**
21 **do you?**

22 A. I don't know. I know that when I need to
23 get rental verification from them, it takes
24 forever because they're so busy.

25 **Q. Okay. All right. Anything else you want to**

1 **add?**

2 A. No.

3 MR. PRINGLE: Okay. Well, that's -- I
4 appreciate that. Please answer any
5 questions that Ms. Hammonds may have for
6 you.

7 THE WITNESS: Sure.

8 MS. HAMMONDS: Thank you, Ms. Wicker.
9 I appreciate your availability today, but
10 Mr. Pringle has covered all the bases very
11 well and I have no questions.

12 MR. PRINGLE: Okay. One more
13 administrative matter and we could have
14 taken this up off the record. There's a
15 provision that would allow you, if you
16 wanted to, to get a draft copy of your
17 deposition and read through it to make sure
18 that everything is spelled right and that
19 you testified accurately.

20 Or you can do what's called "waive
21 reading and signing." I'm not your lawyer,
22 but I would sort of recommend that you just
23 do waive, that you waive it.

24 THE WITNESS: Waive (indicating).

25 MR. PRINGLE: Okay. But that's "waive"

1 with a W-A-I-V-E. You made the wave,
2 W-A-V-E, motion.

3 THE WITNESS: I might stand up and do
4 the wave.

5 MR. PRINGLE: Okay. All right. Well,
6 I think this deposition has come to an end,
7 but thank you, Lessie -- Ms. Hammonds for
8 taking part in this and we'll go off the
9 record now.

10 (There being no further questions, the
11 deposition concluded at 2:27 p.m.)
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1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

2 I, Cassandra E. Vance, Court Reporter
3 and Notary Public in and for the State of
4 South Carolina, do hereby certify that I
5 reported the deposition of ERIN WICKER on
6 the 2nd day of June, 2016; that the witness
7 was first duly sworn by me, and that the
8 foregoing 19 pages constitute a true and
9 correct transcription of the said
10 deposition.

11 I further certify that I am neither
12 attorney nor counsel for, nor related to or
13 employed by, any of the parties connected
14 with this action, nor am I financially
15 interested in said cause.

16 I further certify that the original of
17 said transcript shall be hereafter sealed
18 and delivered to John J. Pringle, Jr.,
19 Esquire, Adams and Reese, LLP, 1501 Main
20 Street, 5th Floor, Columbia, South Carolina
21 29201. This sealed original transcript
22 shall be retained by the above party, who
23 shall be responsible for filing same with
24 the Court prior to trial or any hearing
25 which might result in a final order on any
issue.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand and seal this 6th day of June, 2016.

Cassandra E. Vance, Court Reporter
Notary Public for South Carolina

My commission expires: 2-26-2018